

**Proposed Preliminary Design for State Rt. 161 Shared-Use Path
Public Meeting, June 5, 2012
MEETING SUMMARY**

Overall Meeting Purpose/Expected Outcome

- Outline proposed preliminary design for a shared-use path along State Route 161 between Linworth and Sawmill Roads
- Seek input from residents, businesses and jurisdictions so the evolving design proposal will reflect their input

Date and Location

Tuesday, June 5, 2012
Peggy McConnel Arts Center
777 Evening St.
Worthington, OH 43085

Meeting materials were also made available online at <http://bit.ly/ColumbusBike> (click on Current bike projects)

Meeting Format

The public was invited to view the exhibits prior to the presentation. The presentation began at 6:15 pm. followed by a question and answer session. At 7:15 pm, the discussion was concluded so participants could review the exhibits up close and share their thoughts directly with the project team.

Pre-Meeting Publicity

- Postcard meeting notifications were mailed to approximately 365 stakeholders with property within 500 feet of the 2.2 mile corridor approximately 14-days prior to the meeting.
- About 100 postcards were hand distributed to businesses and organizations located along the corridor one week in advance of the meeting.
- PDFs of the postcard meeting notification were also emailed to the Northwest Civic Association, Far Northwest Coalition, Brookside Estates, Brookside Woods, Perry Township trustees, City of Dublin Engineer, ODOT District 6, City of Columbus neighborhood liaisons for these areas, Consider Biking and Yay Bikes. Phone calls or personal conversations were held with representatives from Perry Township, City of Worthington, ODOT District 6 and City of Dublin.
- A notice was posted on the Consider Biking Facebook site and announced on its list serve.

Meeting Handouts

- Fact sheet
- Comment Form
- Article on University of Cincinnati analysis showing increased property values near bike trails and shared-use paths

Staff Participants

City of Columbus

- Nick Popa, Planning Project Manager
- Jamie Gordon, Design Project Manager
- Daniel Moorhead, Engineer

Consultant Team:

- John Panovsky, Principal in Charge- Korda Engineering
- Brooks Vogel, Project Manager- Korda Engineering
- Marie Keister, Engage Public Affairs, LLC
- Danny Louwers, Engage
- Jackson Keister, Engage

Meeting Summary

43 attendees

Questions, answers and comments at the meeting:

Q/C: Concerns about landscaping/ greenspace and loss of trees.

A: The intent is to retain existing trees and landscaping wherever possible. The median between State Rt. 161 and the shared-use path will be mostly grass except where the path threads through existing trees and landscaping, with a shallow swale to allow drainage.

Q/C: Adding all that asphalt will add heat. Need to keep the trees, as they provide cooling. Trees are important and can serve as boundaries between pedestrians and cars.

Q/C: Is there any thought about moving the path along Snouffer Rd. from the elementary school to Brookside Estates? This would eliminate going through the businesses along 161 and would provide a safe path for kids to get to school.

A: We would like to know more about your idea. After we complete this discussion session, please draw your idea on map we've provided.

Q/C: The RR crossing could be dangerous

A: Let us know your specific area of concern by the railroad tracks by marking it on the map. We are coordinating with CSX to install a safe pedestrian/bicycle railroad crossing.

Q/C: Are there any plans for a safer crossing at Linworth and 161? Can the shared-use path eventually connect to the Olentangy Trail near SR 315?

A: ODOT has plans in the works to improve the intersection at Linworth and SR 161. We will coordinate with them. Eventually we would like to see a nicer connection to the Olentangy bike trail.

Q/C: I served on a committee 20 years ago, and they always talked about the path being on the south side of 161. What is the reasoning behind putting it on the north side?

A: Connectivity between the residents, who are most likely to use the path to get to local destinations at Linworth and Sawmill. By putting the path on the north side, where people live, there will be reduced need to cross SR 161. There are definitely pros and cons on both sides of SR 161.

Q/C: Will utilities be moved from under the path? Will 161 ever be widened? What assurances do owners have that the right-of-way will not be used for something else in the future?

A: A decision was made after a study several years ago that 161 will not be widened. This effort does not intend to relocate existing utilities. Once a recommendation is made, and the City decides to move forward and secures funding, right of way purchase would commence. The City is seeking federal funds from MORPC. There are federal requirements on how right of way purchase proceeds, which ensures the property owner is treated fairly and kept fully informed during the acquisition process.

Q/C: The majority of trees and phone lines are on north side. Wouldn't it be cheaper and more environmentally friendly to put path on south side?

A: There are pros and cons to both sides. There are wetlands and other environmental issues on the south side. We have not developed cost estimates to compare one side versus the other at this point.

Q/C: I ride my bike on SR161 a lot, and I'm actively involved in Brookside Trail Discussions. OSU owns a lot of land on the south side of SR 161. However, OSU was

not a good neighbor and was not willing to give up any land in the past. Will OSU give up land if you pursue a path on the south side?

A: No one has approached the University about this specific proposal, since our preliminary thinking was that it would be more desirable to put the path on the north side where most residents are located.

Q/C: The intersection at Linworth and 161 has no pedestrian crossing. We've been requesting one. We would also like a better, safer connection to Olentangy bike trail.

Q/C: Putting path on south side would make south side a little nicer to look at since it is more of an eyesore as it sits today.

Q/C: Putting path on north side will take away a lot of landscaping that property owners have worked hard on in order to hide 161.

Q/C: Is this project just a desire to connect A to B or is it to be a desirable trail for everyone?

A: Both

Q/C: An average of an accident per week ends up in my front yard or nearby. SR 161 is a very unsafe road. Why put the path here? I'm also concerned about pedestrian safety.

A: Please mark up on the map where these accidents are occurring. This type of input helps us consider problem areas and adjust preliminary designs accordingly.

Q/C: Why has the cost analysis between the north and south side not taken place yet. I'm concerned the decision has already been made – I'd like to see a cost estimate for both sides be completed.

A: Because so many residents live on the north side and it appeared that engineering and environmental issues would be somewhat similar, early on we thought it made sense to move forward with a more detailed concept for the north side of the road. We have not made a decision, however, and we appreciate that you would like to see the south side more fully considered.

Q/C: Why not have path along Snouffer Rd.?

Q/C: I think there are a lot of utilities on the south side of 161.

Q/C: I'm a bike rider who would love having the path and would definitely use it. I would prefer it to be on north over south side for safety and convenience.

Q/C: Snouffer Rd. has a lot of benefits.

Q/C: Putting path on Snouffer Rd. is requested. Having it on 161 is dangerous and Snouffer would be safer. Also, having it on 161 doesn't allow for many people to use it (nobody lives on south side of 161, especially by OSU property). Snouffer is surrounded by neighborhoods and children could use it as a safe path to get to school.

Q/C: You'll need a traffic signal or underpass to connect the path to post office.

Q/C: If people want the path on south side of 161, safe crossing options must be provided (need at least 2 crossing options along the 2.2 mile corridor).

Written and emailed comments (10 received):

1. What is the timetable for having a bike path along that segment of Rt 161 between Sawmill Rd and Linworth Rd?
 - a. Is the plan to have a bike path on one side of the road or both sides?
 - b. Will it be a bike lane as part of the roadway, or will there be some separation between the road and the bike path? If there is separation planned, how much (i.e., how many feet)?
 - c. How wide will the bike path be?
 - d. What is the total width from the edge of the existing roadway to the far edge of the planned bike path?
 - e. Will the drainage ditches on either side of the road be filled in, and if so what new accommodations will need to be made for water drainage?
 - f. Will the bike path be asphalt?
 - g. Will any trees or telephone poles need to be removed or relocated?
 - h. Will there be any protective gate for bikes at the railroad crossing?
 - i. How does this tie into the road widening plan?
2. We heard that the planning is complete and the phase of needed land acquisition is about to start. Is this correct?
3. I believe adding multi-use paths in this area would vastly improve connectivity between the communities and endorse the project. I would like to emphasize how important the 161/Linworth interchange upgrades will be to improve safety and throughput for continuing the bike path.
4. I have planted dozens of trees over the years to buffer my property from Rt 161, and I don't want to lost those trees, that buffer, and part of my front yard. I have no back yard

because there is a ravine that starts literally at the back of my house, and I have a young son who I hope will be able to enjoy my front yard for years to come. Also, I spoke with my neighbor Fran, and she and I both have a concern that putting a shared use path in front of our homes decreases both the privacy and the security that we now enjoy. The south side of Rt 161 is a more appropriate location for this project.

5. It appeared that most of the residents in attendance objected to the 161 placement for a variety of reasons and preferred one further north.
 - a. Most serious bicyclists will not use this path in lieu of riding 161, regardless the inherent dangers, because of the many stop signs along the route. I have also stated, and many agreed, that more danger is created at intersecting driveways along any proposed route.
 - b. I contend that there is nothing scenic, attractive or compelling about a walk or ride along 161.
 - c. The majority of Columbus residents this bond is intended to serve live further north of 161. Their interests would be best served w/ a path in their neighborhood.
6. I wanted to give a hearty two thumbs up on the project. I hope the neighbors & businesses come out to support it. Perhaps it could connect to the Olentangy bikeway in the future?
7. It seems to me that the audience consisted mostly of property owners that did not want the path to go on the North side of the road. However, when I left the meeting I drove the purposed route and discovered they are close to the same number of businesses on each side of the road.
 - a. The overwhelming majority of people using the path live on the north side of route 161 and would be forced to cross.
 - b. Snouffer Road was mention as an alternate route. Two problems exist with this choice. One is no connection to an existing bike path; the existing path ends at Troon Trail. The second and the maybe the most significant problem with Snouffer Road is a steep hill just prior to Olentangy Road.
 - c. My only complaint is the slow process. A completion date of 2015 seems like a long time.
8. The bike path connecting Olentangy River Trail with Dublin bike paths is essential. Placement of the path on the north side is a great idea to make the businesses and residents of the north side accessible.

9. Cut back vegetation from the south side of 161 between Federated and the storage business (Immediately, not in 2015). Who has the responsibility to do this maintenance? Cyclists cannot even use the curb lane because of this.

10. Snouffer is the safer and better alternative to 161 and would give a path for students to get to the schools.